Introducing a new business model

Die storage service for Purso Oy

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ABSTRACT

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Purso Oy is a Finnish aluminium manufacturer, located in Siuro, Nokia. Purso has for many years now faced a problem regarding the storing and maintenance of its many extrusion tools. These tools are an essential part of the extrusion process which enables Purso to provide its customers their uniquely designed aluminium profiles. The problem is that the amount of extrusion tools stored is growing all the time and Purso has to invest more and more resources to keep them all in good shape and properly stored. The purpose of this thesis is to find a solution for this problem.

This thesis was written in order to make a plan for developing Purso's business model by implementing a new storage service for the extrusion tools. Furthermore, the aim is to find new ways for the commissioner to look at its market situation and create new valuable information about its customers and other stakeholders and improve its general efficiency concerning the extrusion process.

Contents of this thesis are the plan and theoretical framework for implementing the new storage service, its integration to the existing business model and an analysis of the underlining issues related to this.

The project based on this thesis was carried out between October 2014 and March 2015 at Purso Oy and the results have been extremely positive. New opportunities and improvements emerged as a result of the project, along with useful insights and ideas for future development. The storage service is now a part of Purso's business model.

Key words: business model, service design, risk analysis, risk management, market analysis, segmentation, pricing

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

Extrusion	Manufacturing process in which a billet of raw material is pushed through a die in order to create a specifically shaped profile
Die	Extrusion tool
LME	London Metal Exchange
Premium	The extra cost of physical aluminium set by suppliers on top of London Metal Exchange prices

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the thesis

The initial idea for this thesis arose from the need to complete a long overdue project for Purso Oy, regarding the storage and maintenance of its extrusion tools. There are currently thousands of these *dies* (extrusion tools used in the extrusion process, henceforth referred to as dies) stored at Purso's premises. The problem is that during the last decades, more than twenty thousand different dies have been made, and many of them still remain stored at the premises.

This thesis aims at making a coherent plan for introducing a new business model, a working storage service for the storing and maintaining unused dies. The idea was first discussed with Purso's customer profiles sales manager, Pekka Myllykangas (2014).

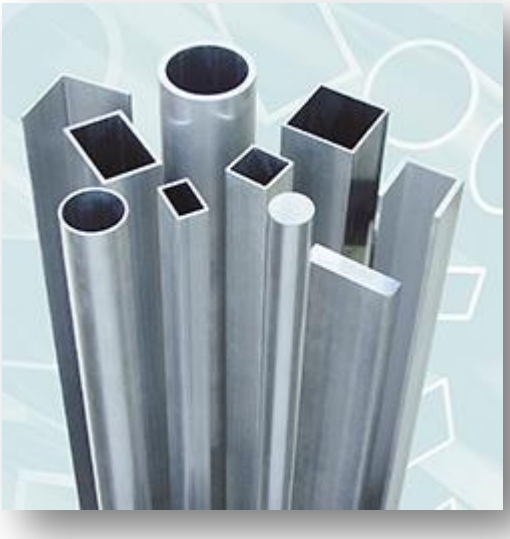
The principle behind what Purso does is that whenever their customer needs to order a uniquely shaped aluminium profile, a new die for producing the profile will be designed and manufactured. The customer will usually pay for this die, but Purso will order it from its subcontractor and will be the owner of the physical die. However, the customer naturally owns their own design for the shape of the profile and the die can only be used to produce this customer's orders, or with a written consent from the customer.

So far around three to four thousand of these dies currently stored at Purso have not been used for three years or more. Purso's general terms and conditions of delivery already state--and always have--that the dies can be scrapped after three years of not being used and without any kind of notice to the customer. This, however, has not always been the practice. Instead, unused dies have been accumulating in the storage space for decades now, probably because it has been thought that having the die ready in case the production continues after many years of inactivity might give some competitive advantage for Purso. Actually this practise has proven to be quite expensive for Purso, as more and more resources have had to be directed into storing and maintaining these basically useless dies. The solution for this problem is to create a new kind of service, through which Purso begins to charge customers for the storing and maintenance of these unused dies, as well as all the unused dies in the future.

1.2 Purso Oy

The commissioner for this thesis is Purso Oy, a Finnish aluminium manufacturer. Purso Oy is a family business, founded in 1959 as Suojapinta Oy, by Esko Ollila. It is a part of the Purso Group, which today consists of five different companies. The main factory and office is located in Siuro, Nokia. In addition to these premises, Purso also has its own aluminium smelter in Ikaalinen and a machine workshop in Pikkala. More than five decades of growing business has made Purso a very well-known aluminium manufacturer in Finland. (Järventie, T. & Raevuori, P. 2009)

More specifically Purso specializes in the manufacturing and further processing of aluminium profiles, including machining and various types of surface finishing. Profiles are made by means of extrusion, a process in which a billet of aluminium (or any other raw material) is pushed through a die in order to create a specifically shaped profile. This shape can be almost anything, ranging from simple pipes and rods to much more complicated shapes. PICTURE 2 shows some examples of the standard profiles manufactured by Purso.



PICTURE 2. Standard profiles (Photo: Purso Oy 2013)

The total revenue of Purso Oy in 2014 was approximately 73 million Euros. Aluminium deliveries for the same year were over 17,000 tonnes, of which almost 40% was exported directly. The total amount of employees is around 250 and the total production area

is over 50000 square meters. In 2014 Purso Oy was honored with the Subcontractor of the year-award, given by the Finnish Association of Purchasing and Logistics (LOGY).

1.3 Objective of the thesis

Objective of this thesis is to successfully communicate to the customers about the new service for storing and maintaining unused dies. The main goal for the commissioner is to improve its service quality and delivery performance. Another important aspect for Purso is to optimize the use of its limited storage capacity, as well as to activate old customers for making new orders and reminding them about their existing assets. The financial benefit that can be gained from annual storage fees and scrap metal is also potentially quite significant.

What needs to be done is to collect all the available information about the customers whose dies (or some of them) have not been used for more than three years, and contact them. As an outcome of this project many, likely most, of the unused dies will be scrapped, and for the rest Purso Oy will receive a reasonable compensation for continuing to store and maintain them. The amount of space saved alone is a very important factor, as there are thousands of them in total. So far Purso has been storing these unused dies for free, and some of them have been scrapped after the first three years on inactivity without any notice. This way of operating is not good for either Purso or the customer.

PICTURE 1. Obsolete extrusion die (Photo: Lauri Mielonen, 2015)

2 Thesis plan

2.1 Scope of the thesis

This thesis mainly focuses on the planning of the implementation of Purso's new die storage service as part of its developed business model, and analyzing the underlining issues related to this. Plan for the service and the actual implementation are also addressed here and the project plan and the results of the project are discussed later, in chapters 3 and 4.

The main questions that this thesis aims to answer for the commissioner are:

- How many customers are willing to pay for the storage of their dies?
- Can old products be reactivated due to this project?
- How will charging for the storage and maintenance affect the business relationship?
- How to best communicate to the customers about the new service?
- What is the long term effect of this project for the company?
- What are the financial impacts?
- How much storage space can be saved by scrapping unused dies?

2.2 Concepts and theory

The thesis will look into theories concerning business models, risk analysis, risk management, market analysis, customer segmentation and pricing. These theories are then applied in practice by making a plan for implementing the die storage service.

It is crucial to design the service so that Purso can improve the quality of its service in general, as well as the interaction between Purso and its customers. At the beginning of the project all the customers for this service are existing customers, but once the new business model is implemented all the future customers will become potential customers for it as well.

The biggest challenge for this project is to determine how to best contact the customers, and what the message should be and how to make customers understand and appreciate

the fact that this new service will indeed improve Purso's customer service, delivery reliability and efficiency.

2.2.1 Business model

Business model simply means the way in which a company makes money. According to Investopedia.com (2015) business model is "The plan implemented by a company to generate revenue and make a profit from operations."

More expanded definition is given by Christensen, Johnson and Kagermann in their Harvard Business Review article "Reinventing your business model" (1996). According to the article any business model consists of four different parts. These are the customer value proposition, profit formula, key resources and key processes. Customer value proposition means that the company has found a way to generate value for its customers by helping them perform an important job. Profit formula mainly consists of a revenue model and cost structure (direct and indirect costs and economies of scale). Key resources are all the assets the company has, including employees, technology, facilities, equipment and connections, in order to deliver value for its customers. Key processes are, for any successful company, the processes that allow them to deliver value in a way that can be repeated and gradually increased.

In Purso's case, the value proposition is that the customer gets an aluminium profile that specifically fits their needs. It could be said that revenue model consists purely of selling processed aluminium, and the storage and maintenance of the necessary extrusion dies is nothing but an indirect cost of this structure, just like facilities or other equipment. Storing and maintaining the dies enables Purso to fulfil its value proposition, but what about those dies that are no longer in active use?

Storing unused dies has not been part of Purso’s business model, and it has not been considered as something that creates value, but more as just a necessary fixed cost, as was mentioned above. Whenever dies are stored for more than three years (three years being what Purso has always guaranteed for its customers), they are not necessarily taken good care of anymore, and will easily become neglected. Previously they have also been scrapped in a seemingly indiscriminate manner after being inactive for more than

three years. This could create a problem for customers, as they don't know which of their dies are still active and which are scrapped.

Another issue is that the dies require regular maintenance and need to be stored properly in order to keep them functional. This can be solved by incorporating the storage and maintenance into the business model. The result should be that there are less dies to store, as the customers are likely to only pay for storing dies that they quite probably will need again. Also, those dies that are stored will generate revenue, instead of only generating more costs. This way it's easier to keep them functional and both Purso and the customer will have a mutual understanding of which dies are stored and which are not. Informing the customers about their expiring dies before scrapping them and giving them an opportunity to keep them stored longer creates new value for the customers and it should most definitely be a part of the service. This would form the customer value proposition offered by the new business model.

2.2.2 Risk analysis

Risk analysis refers to the study of uncertainties caused by a certain course of action. According to Investopedia.com (2015) article on risk analysis: "Risk analysis refers to the uncertainty of forecasted future cash flows streams, variance of portfolio/stock returns, statistical analysis to determine the probability of a project's success or failure, and possible future economic states. Risk analysts often work in tandem with forecasting professionals to minimize future negative unforeseen effects."

As the implementation of this project also carries some risks, a proper risk analysis is needed, in order to find out whether the risks entailed are tolerable or not. By determining the *risk acceptance criteria* (risk tolerability limits), it can be seen which risk are tolerable (when calculated risk is lower than pre-determined value) and which are intolerable. *Risk-reducing measures* need to be well planned for coping with the possible intolerable risks, as well as mitigating other risks too. (Aven, 2008)

For this purpose a so-called simplified risk analysis should be sufficient. Simplified risk analysis is described by Aven (2008, 4) as "an informal procedure that establishes the risk picture using brainstorming sessions and group discussions. The risk might be pre-

sented on a coarse scale, e.g. low, moderate or large, making no use of formalised risk analysis"

The tolerable risks can and should also be at least reduced, if not avoided altogether, by making an explicit plan for risk management. Risk-reducing measures need to be planned with the key sales and management people at Purso. The most critical risks need to be also considered by the top management.

The risk assessment for this project is based on several staff meetings and interviews at Purso Oy. Implementing the new business model will have certain risks. The following table is the result of these meetings and interviews and it illustrates the most important risks concerning the project, along with simple risk-reducing measures:

TABLE 1. Risk matrix

Likelihood (1-3)	**Risk**	**Impact (1-3)**	**Actions**
1-Unlikely	Customer will change the supplier	3-High	It would be intolerable to lose an important customer (Strategic-, focus-, or key customer, as defined in chapter 2.2.6) Provide important customers with a better offer, possibly a bulk discount
2-Possible	Damage for the brand image	2-Med	Careful planning on how to communicate the message for customers can reduce the risk
2-Possible	Customer dissatisfaction, complaints	1-Low	Prepare to explain why Purso is creating this new service and how it will improve the delivery performance. Also remember to point out that with an order there will be three years of free storage
3-Likely	Customers have not read the terms of delivery properly and insist that the dies are their property	2-Med	Point out to the customer that this has always been in the terms and conditions of delivery and that this only changes things in the future, and towards the better
3-Likely	Customers demand to store their die(s) themselves	1-Low	Make guidelines for the salespeople for explaining to the customers that the die(s) are actually owned by Purso, and that our general policy prevents this
2-possible	Wrong dies get scrapped	1-Low	Create clear instructions for scrapping utilize ERP-system efficiently
2-possible	Price too high/low	2-Med	Careful planning for pricing

This analysis covers the most relevant risks of the project, and simple actions for preventing or mitigating them. A more thorough plan for risk management is laid out in the following chapter.

As can be seen from the risk matrix, the biggest risk in terms of its impact for Purso is that the customers will change their supplier. This, however, is considered to be highly unlikely. Even so, the following risk management plan will consider the means of avoiding the biggest risk and how to mitigate the lesser risks in the best possible way. Although, in this analysis the most likely risks and possible risks come with less impact, it has to be taken into account that they can also lead to more serious consequences if handled poorly.

2.2.3 Risk management

According to Aven (2008), risk management simply means all the measures and activities that are carried out in order to manage risk. It deals with how to best balance the entailed risks in exploring new opportunities on one hand and avoiding losses, accidents and disasters on the other.

The risk management for this project is based on avoidance of the high impact risks (intolerable risks) and mitigation of medium and low impact risks. The only intolerable risk is considered to be the loss of an important (strategic customer). Other risks, even though less severe, are to be avoided or mitigated in the best possible way.

For this purpose a well thought-out plan for managing risk should be made. This involves especially the people at sales department, who are the ones dealing with customers on daily basis and are the face of the organization outwards. They are also the ones who have to market the new service for customers.

The following table contains a plan for avoiding or mitigating the low and medium impact risks:

TABLE 2. Risk management plan

Risk	Means of avoiding/ mitigating the risk
Damage for the brand image	The only thing that can be done is to make sure that communication towards the customer is done well in advance and in a professional and friendly manner. The general announcement (Appendix 1.) about this new service is therefore done over two months before any dies are scrapped or anything is charged for the service. It is essential to state the reasons for this service and the benefits that come with it. Damage that cannot be avoided by these measures must be considered as an accepted risk.
Customer dissatisfaction, complaints	The same applies here as for the above. In case of individual complaints from customers, there have been several staff meetings where it has been talked about how to explain the reasons behind the new service. This prepares individual sales people to explain it to the customers and likely make them understand Purso's point of view on the matter.
Customers demand that the dies are their property since they have paid for it	Refer them to Purso's general terms and conditions, where it is stated that the physical tools are actually owned by Purso Oy, and the customer only owns the design for the profile. Even more important is to point out that Purso provides necessary maintenance for the dies in its storage, and takes responsibility for repairing or replacing them if they break during extrusion, which tends to happen from time to

	time.
Customers demand to store their die(s) themselves	Same applies here as above. In case insuperable trouble comes up with the customer not accepting Purso's general terms and conditions, a document is prepared for handing over the die for the customer. (Appendix 6.) The time required and risks of fighting over the ownership of the physical die are deemed more than it is worthwhile to undertake for Purso.
Wrong dies get scrapped	Input all the information about the dies in the ERP-system so that the ones to be scrapped can be listed and compare it to the excel that's been updated according to customers answers. In case something goes wrong on Purso's part, the customer will be compensated for a new die. This could be very expensive compared to the price of the service.
Price for the service is too high/low	Careful planning for pricing, as explained later in chapter 2.2.7

This plan aims at covering the main principles of risk management, as defined in ISO 31000:2009. According to the definition, risk management should:

- create value
- be integral part of organizational processes
- be part of decision making process
- be based on the best information available
- be tailorable
- take human factors into account

The risks mentioned above will be monitored and feedback from customers is collected by the sales department and brought in the attention of the sales manager, and if necessary, the top management.

2.2.4 Market analysis

The main competitors of Purso in Finland are Mäkelä Alu and Sapa Group. Mäkelä Alu and Purso Oy are currently the only two companies that have aluminium extrusion plants in Finland, and they are roughly the same size in all aspects. Sapa Group is a much bigger company and their extrusion plants are abroad, but they sell profiles in Finland as well. There is increasing pressure from suppliers abroad to enter the Finnish market. The competition abroad is already much more intense and Purso is a rather small player there.

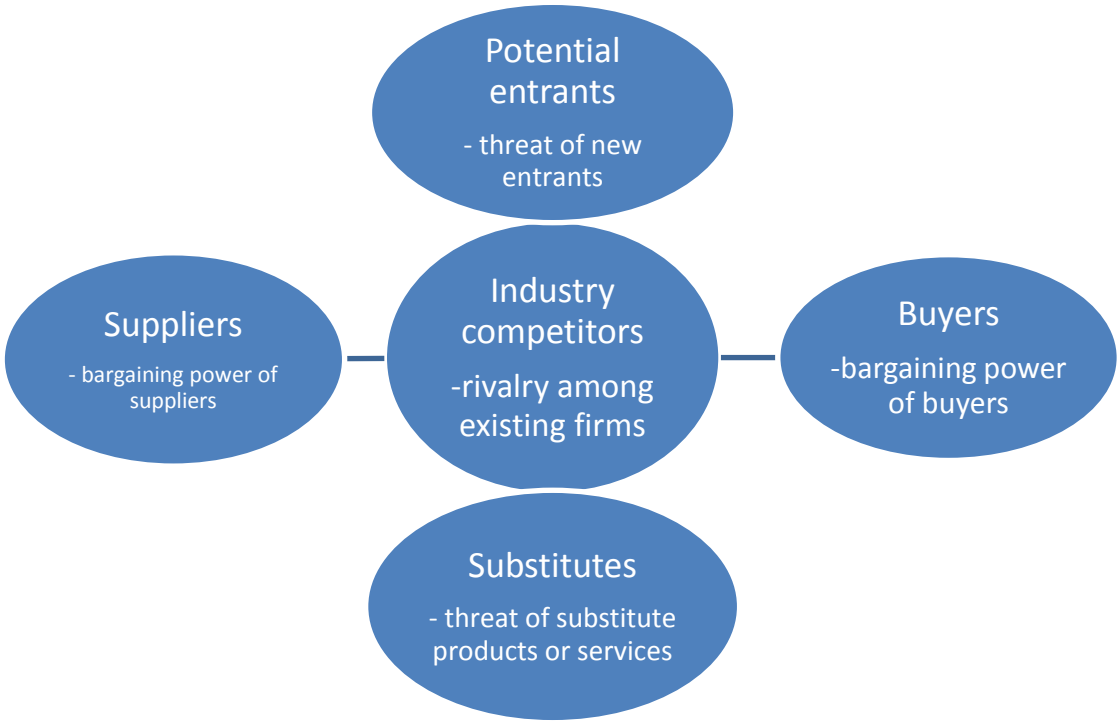


FIGURE 1. Forces driving industry competition (Porter 1980)

In this Porter's (1980) model, the state of competition in an industry depends on five competitive forces coming from buyers, suppliers, substitutes and potential entrants. The collective strength of the forces determines what is the profit potential of that industry, which is measured by long run returns on invested capital. Different industries naturally vary in their potential, depending on the intensity of the industry.

The market situation in aluminium industry has been largely affected by the rapid increase in the price of primary aluminium. The price increase is a sum of many things. It is affected by aluminium LME-index, premium and in this case the euro/USD currency exchange rate. This situation has reflected as price increases for Purso's customers. Even though Purso has its own smelter, which melts and casts recycled aluminium into billets, the price of scrap aluminium has also risen along with the primary aluminium. Still this gives Purso some price leverage. The price increase of raw material could in some cases mean that other materials became more feasible to use than aluminium. It also creates an intense situation between competing suppliers; who is going to try to benefit from increasing prices of raw material by increasing prices more than necessary to cover increasing costs? It could be that the price of aluminium rises to a record high during 2015, as speculated in the Reuters article (2014).

2.2.5 SWOT-Analysis

SWOT-analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is a marketing tool that analyses the external and internal environments of a company. The strengths and weaknesses of a company are internal and opportunities and threats are posed from the outside market, thus making them external factors.

Marketing opportunities are an area of need for the buyer where a company can perform profitably. The success of a company depends on whether its business strengths match the success requirements for operating in the target market and whether the company is able to exceed the strengths of its competitors. Plain competence doesn't give a company a competitive advantage, but only the best performing company will be able to create most customer value and also keep it up over long periods. (Kotler, 2000)

Environmental threats are challenges posed by unfavourable external trends or developments that could to a decrease in sales or profit of a company. To avoid these threats companies need to take defensive marketing actions. Threats can and should be classified according to how serious and how probable they are. Minor threats can be ignored, whereas more serious risks need to be monitored and the most serious threats require a contingency plan for the changes that the company is prepared to make if needed. (Kotler, 2000)

Businesses should periodically evaluate their internal strengths and weaknesses, and compare them to the external factors, market opportunities and threats. The big question after this is whether the company should limit itself to those opportunities that it already possesses the required strengths for, or consider better opportunities by developing its strengths.

The following SWOT-analysis considers what are Purso's main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the current market situation regarding this project specifically.

TABLE 1. SWOT-Analysis

Strengths ➢ Extrusion tools are not compatible with other manufacturers' equipment and they are also owned by Purso, making it difficult and expensive for the customer to change the supplier ➢ Full order backlog	Weaknesses ➢ Long delivery times ➢ Weak delivery reliability ➢ Outdated customers database ➢ Imperfect listing of dies
Opportunities ➢ Nordic Aluminium, one of the main competitors in Finland quit the business during 2014, improving Purso's market position ➢ Many competitors already have similar policies concerning the extrusion tools in place	Threats ➢ Price of raw material has been increasing rapidly since early 2014, making it more feasible to use substitutes materials for aluminium parts ➢ Competition from abroad is likely to increase much more in the future

The main strengths in the business, as well as regarding this project, is that once you get a customer, they are usually bound to invest some money in the die(s) of their own design. This makes them likely to also want to remain as customers rather than investing into new die(s) from a competitor. Of course, many customers, especially the bigger ones, have more than one supplier. Another strength of Purso and what also makes this a good time to undertake this project is that the order backlog for the period (November-

February) is already quite full. Thus there is really no risk of losing sales in the immediate future.

Currently the most notable weaknesses of Purso that could drive customers to use other suppliers or even change the supplier entirely are long delivery times and weak delivery reliability. This is caused by an unusually large amount of orders combined with accumulating problems in production. Weaknesses more specifically concerning this project are the customer database and listing of existing dies. They are both outdated and not well maintained. There are numerous customers for whom no contact details are restored in the ERP-system. This inevitably results in the situation where all the relevant customers cannot be efficiently, or at all, contacted regarding their unused dies, because no contact information exists.

The exit of Nordic Aluminium from the aluminium profile market (it being one of only three Finnish suppliers) has improved Purso's market situation quite significantly, as all their old customers have been looking for new suppliers. The exit came as quite a surprise for many companies, so they are also in a big rush to find a new supplier, which in turn improves Purso's negotiation position even further.

The price of primary cast aluminium has increased significantly and unusually fast since early 2014. At first it was caused by the increase in the premium and by the end of 2014 and early 2015 it has been further increasing due to the changes in currency exchange rates. This in turn causes another threat in the market due to increasing competition from abroad.

2.2.6 Customer segmentation

Customer segmentation is defined by Businessdictionary (2015) as "The act of separating a group of clients into sets of similar individuals that are related from a marketing or demographic perspective. For example, a business that practices customer segmentation might group its current or potential customers according to their gender, buying tendencies, age group, and special interests."

Since all the customers for this service are already existing customers, it is worthwhile to analyze the customer base and consider which customers are the most important ones

for Purso. As can be seen from the previous risk analysis, there are considerable risks in implementing the service, and in order to be able to take the premeditated actions to avoid or mitigate these risks, customer segmentation is useful.

Customer segmentation means the division of customers into specific groups, based on any set of attributes, relating to marketing. This enables a company to target these specific customer groups effectively and to best direct the use of its limited marketing resources. A clear segmentation of customers could be useful for Purso in a variety of scenarios outside this project as well.

In the following customer segmentation model, represented by Saarelainen (2013), the customers are divided into four different groups; Customers, Key customers, Focus customers and Strategic customers, based on two variables. The same model can be applied for Purso's customer base, but with some modifications to make it better fit the business of aluminium manufacturing.

More specifically for this project, we are talking about *value-based segmentation*, which according to Infoentrepreneurs.org (2015) "looks at groups of customers in terms of the revenue they generate and the costs of establishing and maintaining relationships with them." Customer segmentation applied next is based on two variables; sales volumes and profit analysis. Due to the nature of this information, customers shall be presented anonymously.

Further analysis was deemed necessary only for customers whose annual purchases were above a certain level. Smaller customers are segmented to the same category regardless of the profit analysis on their part. The following analysis consists of customers whose annual purchases from Purso were above 30 000€ during 2014 (Tilaaja-asiakasseuranta 2014)

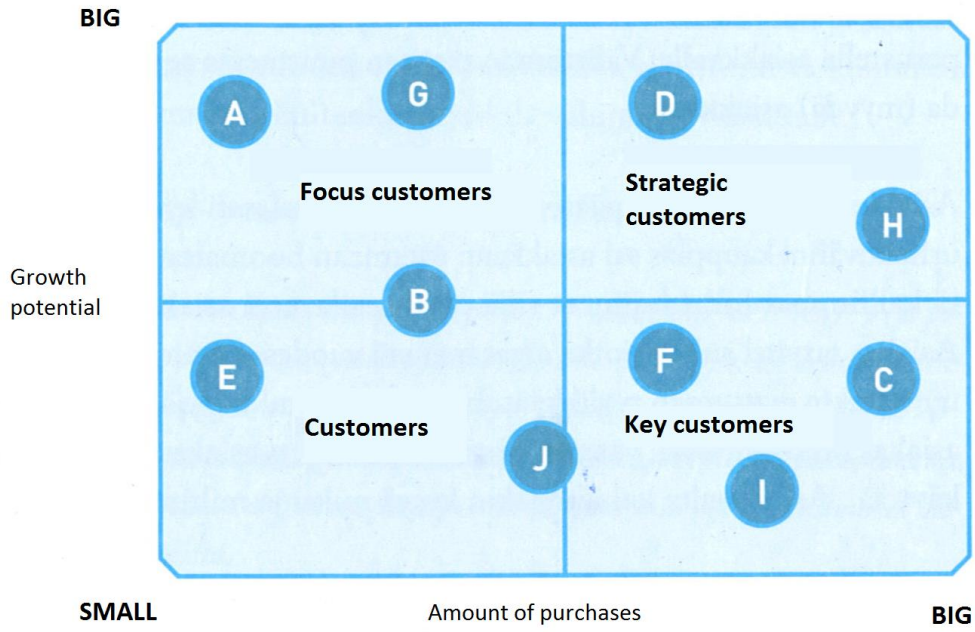


FIGURE 2. Dynamic customer segmentation model by Saarelainen, 2013. (Modified)

Customers are segmented into four different sections, based on their profitability and amount of purchases. As seen above, there are customers, key customers, focus customers and strategic customers. This model adopted from Saarelainen (2013) is modified for the purpose of the segmentation regarding Purso's customers by replacing "growth potential" with "Euros per kilo", as can be seen in FIGURE 3.

This indicator of profitability looks at how much revenue each kilogram of raw material—in this case, aluminium—generates from the customer. Euro per kilogram is a unique figure for each customer. Of course this is not directly proportional to profitability, since aluminium profiles are sold with wildly different levels of post-processing. They can be sold as mere raw profile or with different types of machining, anodizing, powder-coating, etc. Some profiles are also harder to extrude than others, causing more scrap in the process and so on. As an initial figure for reflecting profitability €/kg is still a pretty good indicator, since the more price there is, the more room for profit there is. This is also in line with Purso's strategy, which aims to increase the sales of post-processed profiles and the level of post-processing in the future.

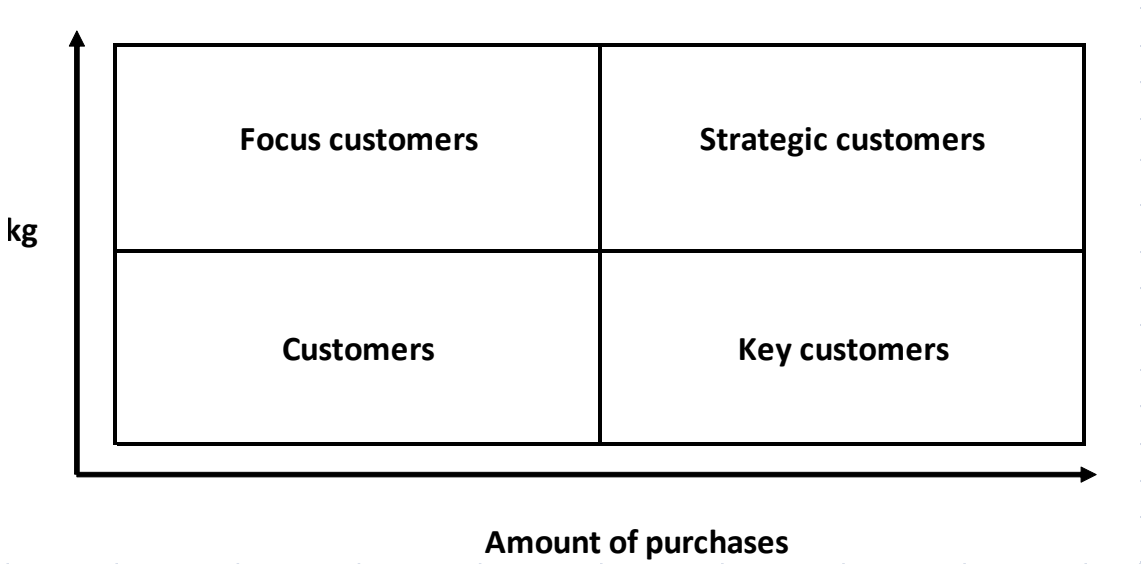


FIGURE 3. Model for customer segmentation, based on Saarelainen, 2013.

Using this model divides the customers in four different segments. Customers represent the group of so-called normal customers who are important and deserve good service, but to whom no special attention should be given. Key customers represent the core of sales where a huge part of revenue is generated, as can be seen in FIGURE 6. Focus customers are the customers who have much potential to create revenue as well as profit. They are strategically important due to their potential, even though they don't generate a lot of revenue yet. This section is where the focus should be for increasing sales. Strategic customers both create a significant amount of revenue and profit. These are the most valuable customers that Purso should keep by all means necessary.

So the goal is to identify the most profitable customers, as well as the biggest customers in terms of their annual purchases from Purso. What is suggested by this model is that if, for example, one customer buys goods for 200 000€ annually for 6€/kg, and another one buys goods for 20€/kg, but only for 15 000€ annually, the first one represents a strategic customer for Purso, whereas the latter is a normal customer.

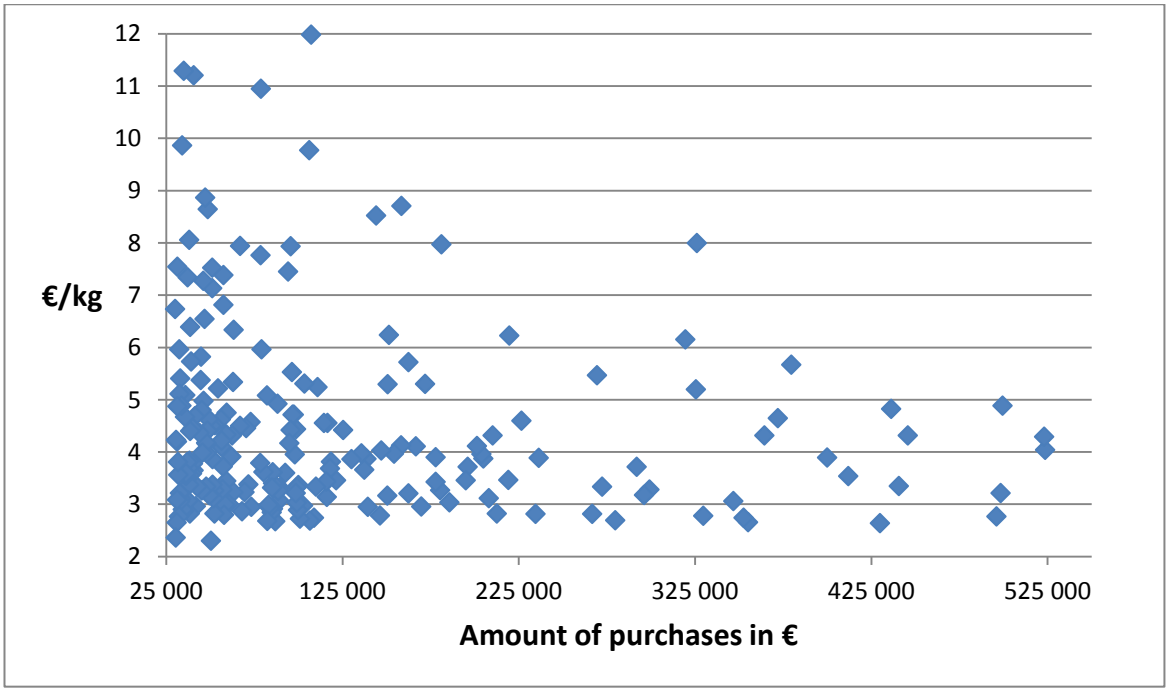


FIGURE 4. Model for customer segmentation based on actual data (Tilaaja-asiakasseuranta 2014)

The graph illustrates how a vast majority of Purso's customers consist of smaller customers with annual purchases below 100 000€, and most of them place below six on the €/kg scale. The distribution is not at all even, and the amount of customers buying large quantities with big €/kg-ratio very small. These are, however, the most important customers and as we can see from the next figures, they also create huge amount of revenue for Purso.

The following figures show the different segments of Purso's customers in terms of how many customers there are in each segment and how much revenue each segment creates. This gives a good picture as to how the customer base can be divided in a meaningful way.

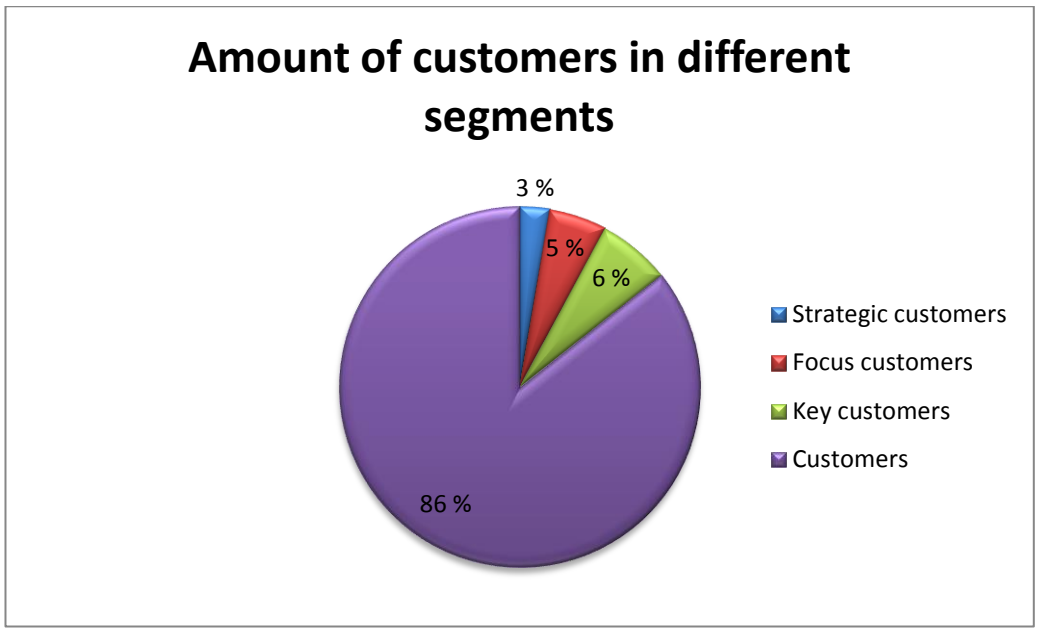


FIGURE 5. Amount of customer in the four segments

Total amount of customers used in this segmentation is 1102, which is the total amount of customers to whom Purso sold aluminium profiles during last year (Tilaaja-asiakasseuranta). Notable is that 86% of all customers are in the customer segment.

Yet, when looked at the amount of revenue generated by each segment of customers, it can be seen that the biggest segment (86%) generates only 38% of all revenue.

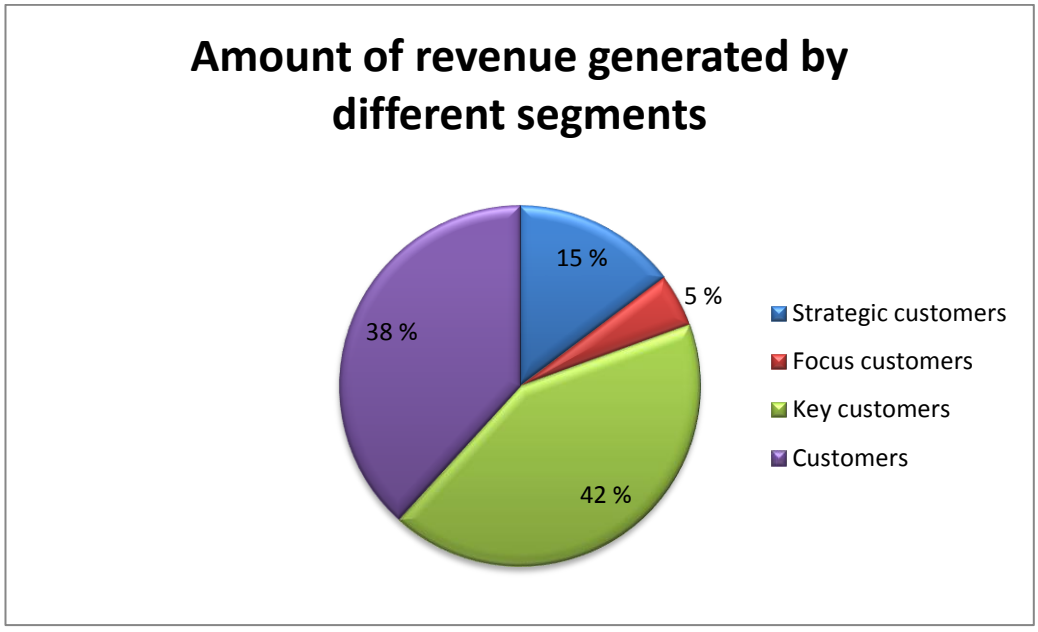


FIGURE 6. Total revenue divided by segments

This figure clearly points out how important the strategic, key and focus customers are for Purso. If, for example, fifty customers in the customers segment would suddenly change their supplier, it would affect the revenues by approximately 2-3%, assuming that they represent the average sized company in that segment. As for strategic customers, the loss of even ten customers would have an impact of 5% for the total revenues, by the same principle.

The aim should be to make the focus customers come closer to key customers in the amount of sales. This is in line with Purso's strategy, as was discussed in the semi-annual sales budget meeting with the customer profile sales organization (2014).

2.2.7 Pricing

There are several factors that should be considered while thinking about the ultimate price of the service. It can be either too high or too low. If the price is set too low, the aim of reducing stock of unused dies and/or making the storage cost-effective could be missed. The price can also be set too high. In this case not enough customers are willing to pay for it and in consequence Purso might lose a substantial amount of revenues; either because the customer doesn’t want to pay for a new die, or because they end up changing the supplier entirely.

Idea is that the price is same for everyone, but it has to be considered there are multiple customers who have more than one or two unused die that will have to be either stored or scrapped. Some sort of bulk discount should be considered for these cases**.** In addition to the number of dies, the segmentation should be taken into consideration. For key-, focus- and strategic customers, different pricing models should be considered.

Another thing to consider in pricing is the prevailing social norms. For example, old customers expect that they are treated better than new customers, as this is the prevalent social norm, according to Maxwell (2008). This is something that wasn't taken into consideration in the customer segmentation, so each case has to be addressed individually as they emerge, due to lack of any general guideline. Purso has, for example, many customers that have been loyal towards Purso for many decades now, and this should be taken into account.

The price for the storage service was fixed at 195€ per die. This was considered reasonable, since the cost of the dies usually ranges from 1000€ up to 8000€, so it would make sense to pay 195€ for keeping the die if there is even a slightest change of needing it again in the course of next year, or possibly during the next few years. The price was set during a meeting with customer profile sales manager, Pekka Myllykangas (2014). It was also estimated in the same meeting that around ten percent of the unused dies would be stored in the future with this kind of price, and the rest would be scrapped.

2.3 Working methods and data

The working methods involve internal meetings at Purso, as well as interviews with the key sales people. This project is regularly discussed at weekly sales meetings and one-on-one interviews whenever necessary.

Data used consists of the customer data base and listing of dies. This information is analyzed by using Microsoft Excel to find out which die belongs to which customer. The ERP-system (Powered) has a customer number related to most dies, and by updating the customer database and combining these two lists in Excel it is possible to connect most of the dies to the customer they are registered for. For those dies that lack a customer number, history from the ERP-system should reveal who has previously ordered the profile. This should in almost all cases leads directly to the right customer.

The following chapter includes a project plan and describes the implementation of the new storage service in practice.

3 Project

3.1 Project plan

Project, as defined by businessdictionary.com (2015) is a "planned set of interrelated tasks to be executed over a fixed period and within certain cost and other limitations." So the most important thing is that a project has limits, as opposed to a process, which does the same things repeatedly. In other words, a project is always a unique undertaking; it can only be done once and it creates change. Also, projects are led, whereas processes are managed.

The performance measures for this project are set in the thesis plan, and the project is measured by how well it delivers the wanted results and whether is answers all the main questions set for the thesis. The project is supervised by the customer profiles sales manager on behalf of the commissioner, and is carried out by the sales team, primary myself.

The key aim for this project is that the die storage service will be operating as a process after the implementation. The foundation and general rules will be created as a result of this project and the same process will be repeated annually in the future.

The first thing to do is to make a plan for how to implement the new service. FIGURE 7 illustrates the six main phases of the project and the timeline for it. The project starts in October 2014 and will be completed in the beginning of March 2015. After this the service should be operational.

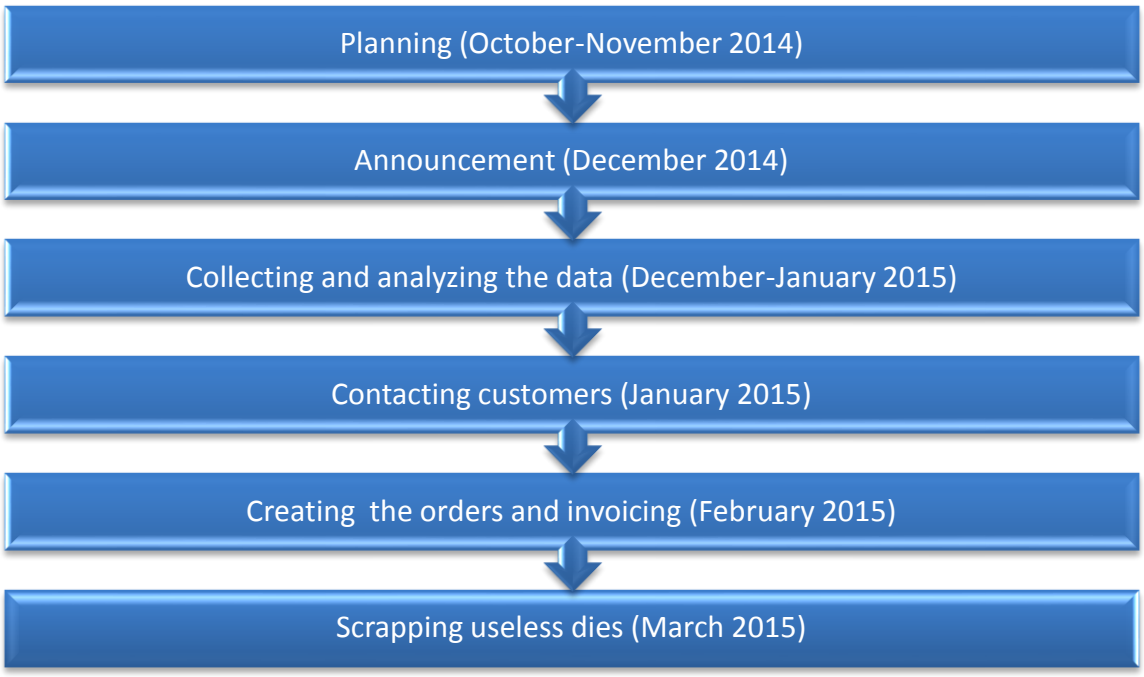


FIGURE 7. Simplified project plan

The project will be done according to the steps and by utilizing the chapter 2 thesis plan and all its elements.

After this the service is implemented and operational, there will be annual checks, which means that the last three stages of the previous project plan figure need to be repeated. As the all the necessary information is updated in the system, the list of unused dies including information about whose it registered for, can be printed out straight from the ERP-system next time, which allows the annual checks and invoicing become a repeated process.

3.2 Implementation

3.2.1 Planning

The planning consists of the theories addressed in this thesis which are applied for the plan as shown in FIGURE 7. According to the outlines laid out in chapters 1.3., 2.1. and 2.2. the necessary documents, data and the timeline was set during October and November. There were two important meetings held with sales manager Pekka Myllykangas (2014) and die shop engineer Mika-Petteri Laakso (2014) about how to implement the project in practice.

3.2.2 Announcement about the new service

The initial announcement (Appendices 1,2,3,4,5) was made during December of 2014 for all customers via email and the announcement was also published at Purso's website in November. As discussed in 2.2.3., it was important to contact all customers well in time before the service would be in place, in order to give them time to think and so that they don't feel pressured by any sudden changes.

All together there were over a thousand emails sent to individual customers in Finland, while the abroad customers were informed by Purso's representatives in their target countries.

3.2.3 Collecting and analyzing the data

Pre-existing data for doing this project consists of an imperfect customer registry and a list of unused dies (not been used for the past three years and no open orders). The first task was to sort out contact information for all the customers who have unused dies. Those two listings were compiled into one excel sheet that was at this point still missing most of the contact details for customers who had unused dies registered for them.

After sorting out the list of unused dies, it was found that there are currently all together 3295 dies that have not been used for the past three years. Of these 567 were Purso’s own dies, mostly used for making standardized profiles. Each department will determine which of these dies are still useful, and they were not dealt with by this project. The remaining 2728 dies are for customer profiles, and these will either be stored at the customer’s expense or scrapped. Of these 815 are for export customers and 1913 for domestic customers.

3.2.4 Contacting customers

During January and February, most of the customer on the list of 2728 dies were contacted via email and many of them also answered about whether to store their dies or not. Customers abroad were contacted by Purso or Purso's representatives in their own countries, Nordisk Alu Profil AB in Sweden, Nordisk Profil A/S in Denmark and

Trimconex in Germany and the Netherlands. The following table illustrates the results of these email inquiries.

TABLE 3. Summary of the unused dies and inquiries

	Number of unused dies	Dies inquired
Finland	1913	1656
Denmark	434	434
Sweden	168	168
Germany	101	81
Export, other	112	47
Total	**2728**	**2386**

This table shows that from the total amount of 2728 unused dies, we were able to contact the customers for 2386 of them, a respectful 87 percent. This is a positive figure, considering that some of the unused dies were last used over ten years ago, and many of the companies that used them no longer even exist.

TABLE 4. Answers received about the die storage service

	Answers received from customer		
	To be stored	New order	To be scrapped
Finland	210	15	404
Denmark	30	7	267
Sweden	20	1	31
Germany	4	10	61
Export, other	4	0	63
Total	**268**	**33**	**826**

Many of the customers that were contacted never answered anything, as can be seen from the summary of all customer responses. 826 dies were answered for from the inquired 2386, around 35%. This was somewhat anticipated, and the message was clear from the beginning; in case there is no answer the dies will be scrapped without any further notice.

3.2.5 Creating the orders and invoicing

New label was created in to the ERP-system for the storage service, and normal orders were created for those customers who had in time requested that their dies be stored. Purso's representatives abroad handled invoices to their respective customers.

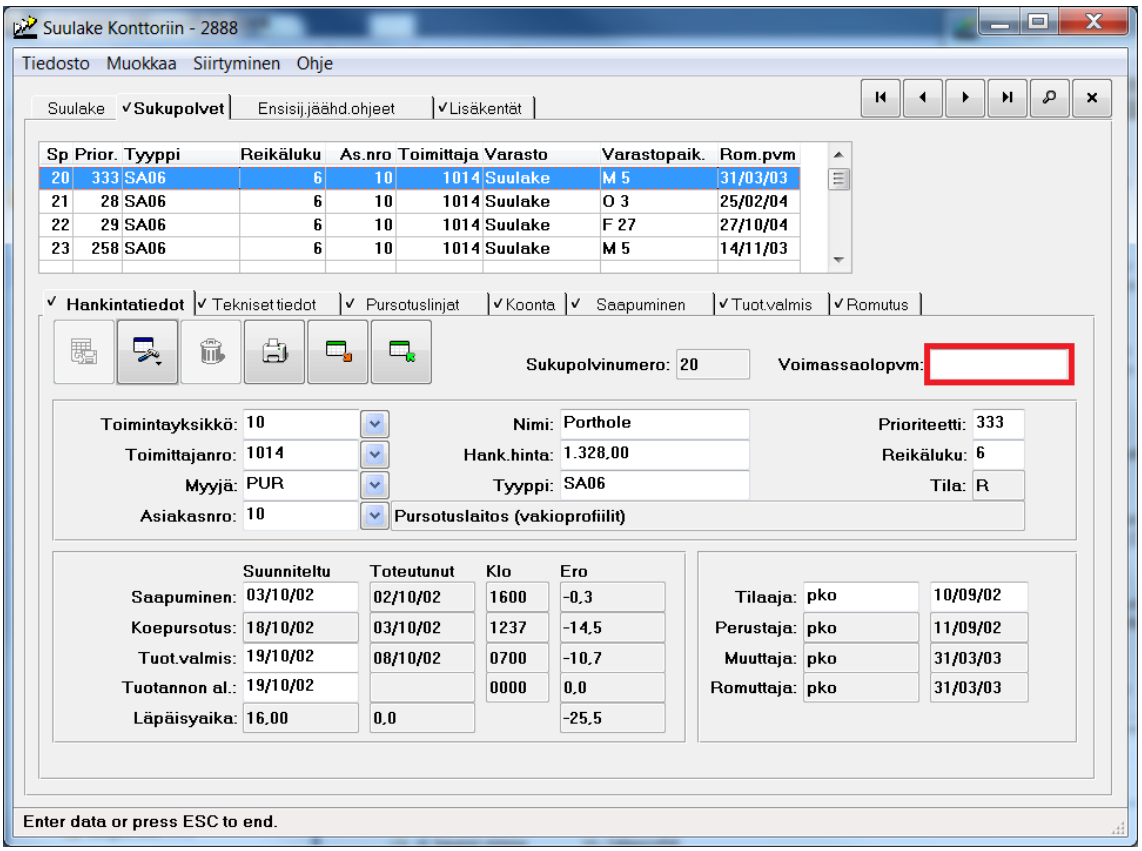
The timeline at this stage had to be stretched a bit, as so many of the customers weren't able to give answers within the original time limit. This was partly due to the failures in contacting all the customers on time also. The lack of proper contact details, combined with some problems in identifying the right customer for certain dies caused some problems, as it was predicted previously in the SWOT-analysis part.

After all, the very last orders were still put in the system and invoiced before the end of March, so in the end the time frame didn't move too much.

3.2.6 Scrapping the useless dies

During March the excel sheet was finished, consisting of all inactive dies and all the answers received from customers. For the dies about which there were either no answer or no existing contact details for the customer were all marked to be scrapped.

The information was then input in to the ERP-system so that the dies that are stored by the service will expire by the end of the year. This makes it possible to generate a new list in the January of next year and there will be enough time to contact customers before the beginning of February, and scrap inactive dies during March. This way the cycle remains the same every year.



PICTURE 3. Entering the expiring date to Powered

It was estimated in a meeting with the die shop engineer Mika-Petteri Laakso (2015) that the actual scrapping of the physical dies will take quite a long time, probably several months and the die shop will likely have to hire an extra worker for the period. However, that will be another project for the die shop to undertake, and the practicalities concerning that are not within the scope of this thesis.

4 Conclusion

This main goal of this thesis was to find a solution for the commissioners existing problem. The scope of the thesis was well limited from the beginning and it was able to give answers to all the main questions that were set in chapter 2.1. The following table shows clear answers for the first two questions; how many dies will be stored and can old products be reactivated as a result:

TABLE 5. Summary of the results

	Number of dies	Dies inquired	Dies stored	Dies scrapped
Finland	1913	1656	210	1688
Denmark	434	434	30	397
Sweden	168	168	20	147
Germany	101	81	4	87
Export, other	112	47	4	108
Total	**2728**	**2386**	**268**	**2427**

As a result of the project, 268 dies will be stored by the new die storage service. This is just slightly under the ten percent, that was mentioned in chapter 2.2.7. as a goal for the project. Altogether this amounts to 52260 Euros of revenue for Purso, which is also a satisfying figure.

The financial impacts are in part explained by the amount of stored dies, and in part by the amount of scrap steel from the die and how much it's worth. This was also briefly discussed in the meeting with Mika-Petteri Laakso (2015). The price of scrap steel from the dies is around 0,30-0,35€/kg and the average die weights an estimated 55kgs. This puts the price of scrap between 16,25€ and 19,25€ per die, making the estimated scrap value for the whole project somewhere between 39400 and 46700 Euros. Third factor causing financial impacts is the amount of storage space that is saved in the future and the improvements in efficiency that can be gained. These are rather hard to estimate at this point. But at least the dies don't have to be stored on pallets laying around the factory floor, as it has been recently, since there has not been enough space in the automatic storages. After scrapping there should be enough room in them again, and it might even be possible to sell some of the surplus storages.

There were some new order for the old profiles, but this was not very significant. Mostly customers wanted to save the money for the storage service and ordered some profile to their own storage, in order to have the dies stored at Purso for the next three years free of charge. As for the other issues, there weren't really too much troubles with the customers in general. None of the most important customers (strategic, key and focus customers) had insuperable issues with the new service. Even so, in few cases Purso decided to send some of the dies to the customer after they demanded this. There were careful consideration about this and the document (Appendix 6.) was utilized in this, in order to release Purso from any further liability concerning those dies.

Altogether only around twenty to thirty angry responses out of a few thousand were received, and there was even some positive feedback about the service. These positive feedbacks were exclusively about the fact that the customer was at least contacted before scrapping the die. Internally, Purso also gained a lot of feedback and knowledge about how to improve its processes in the future. These were mainly about the different data bases (customers, dies etc.) and how to make their use more efficient and beneficial.

5 Discussion

After finishing the thesis, it is easy to say that the importance of planning ahead while making a project like this cannot be emphasized too much. Preparing all the necessary documents, such as letter, emails and other responses in advance is always an advantage. When dealing with hundreds, or even thousands of emails, it saves a lot of time and helps to cope with massive amounts of responses. The questions and issues that will arise can be foreseen quite easily, as it proved to be with this project. Most of the responses that we received during the project were about few things that were mentioned in the risk management plan, namely about who owns the die and can we send the dies to the customers. Even though preparing responses in advance might make some messages seem a bit generic, when dealing with big masses it is impossible to create a personal message to everyone. Also, customers appreciate quick responses in these kinds of matters. I found that the risk analysis and risk management plan were quite helpful while being in contact with the customer base, for this reason especially.

It was easier to make the project as I was working at Purso at the same time. Also the knowledge related to all the things made it much more enjoyable as opposed to being someone outside the company. This gave good opportunities to ask questions as they arose and the project didn't have to pause due to lack of knowledge or guidance. The more dull parts of the project, such as analyzing the data in the planning phase, were also easier to perform as I had some time to use for it during my work day, and I didn't always have to work long in the evening after work.

I found from the very beginning that the scope of the thesis was well limited beforehand and I thought this was a good thing, since there was no threat of it really growing out of proportion. The project itself was rather simple and the idea was roughly outlined already when I started working on it. Yet, there was some complex issues relating to it as well, so I did find it to be a highly educational undertaking.

Lastly, the fact that the project was also significant from the financial perspective undoubtedly made it more interesting to work on, and as we more or less reached the financial goals set for it, it was even more satisfying by the end.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Initial announcement for the new die storage (English)

PURSO®

28.11.2014

Dear Customers and partners

Purso Oy is constantly improving the reliability of extrusion tools and maintenance and begins to charge for storage service.

Functional extrusion tool is basis for everything. Since the number of tools is increasingly growing it requires better security of supply as well as storage capacity, begins Purso from 1.1.2015 onwards to charge for tool storage. Surcharge storage concerns only tools out of production/ not ordered for more than 3 years.

The annual storage fee is 195 €/ tool. At this cost Purso undertakes to maintain and keep tool(s) in operational due next year. In case tool(s) will be used during mentioned period, it automatically means that this tool is available next 3 years without cost, acc. to PGT-2010.

Customers will be notified about tools out of production for more than 3 years in writing during January 2015. To ensure that Purso continues to maintain and service the tools, you will be required to confirm it within a Month. If we fail to receive a reply within the time limit, tools will be scrapped without further notice.

These actions will further improve our services and delivery performance.

Sincerely

Purso Oy

Pekka Myllykangas

Sales manager

Appendix 2. Initial announcement for the new die storage (Swedish)

PURSO NAP
NORDISK ALU PROFIL

2014-12-05

Bästa kunder,

Purso Oy/ Nordisk Alu Profil arbetar ständigt med att förbättra tillförlitligheten av pressverktygen och kommer nu börja debitera för en underhållstjänst gällande underhåll och lagringskostnader för dessa.

Fungerande pressverktyg är grunden för vår verksamhet. Eftersom antalet verktyg utökas alltmer krävs det både en bättre försörjningstrygghet för detta såväl som bättre lagringskapacitet, och därför kommer Purso Oy fr.o.m. 2015-01-01 och framåt debitera för verktygsförvaring. Tilläggsavgiften för lagring/ underhåll gäller endast för de verktyg som varit ur produktion/ inte beställts under en period av 3 år.

Den årliga förvaringsavgiften är 1850 kr/ verktyg. För denna kostnad åtar sig Purso att bibehålla verktyget i funktionsdugligt skick kommande år. I de fall verktyget används under denna period betyder det automatiskt att verktyget är disponibelt de kommande 3 åren utan kostnad, enligt PGT-2010.

De kunder vars verktyg varit ur bruk de senaste 3 åren kommer att meddelas skriftligt under januari 2015. För att säkerställa att Purso fortsättningsvis underhåller/ servar verktygen krävs det att kunden bekräftar att de antar detta erbjudande inom en månad. Om vi inte erhåller svar inom denna tidsperiod kommer verktyget/ verktygen att skrotas utan ytterligare meddelande.

Dessa åtgärder vidtas för att ytterligare förbättra vår service och leveranssäkerhet.

Vänligen,

Purso Oy

Pekka Myllykangas

Sales manager

Nordisk Alu Profil

Andreas Augustsson

Appendix 3. Initial announcement for the new die storage (Danish)

17-12-14

PURSO NORDISK PROFIL >>>

Kære Kunder og Partnere

Som led i vores kontinuerlige forbedring af service og kvalitet pålægges der fremadrettet et gebyr for servicering af værktøjer der opbevares på Pursos lager.

Velfungerende værktøjer er basis for hele produktionen. Da antallet af værktøjer vokser, kræver det bedre forsyningssikkerhed og øger lagerkapacitet. Derfor pålægges der fra 01-01-2015 et gebyr for opbevaring af værktøjer. Dette gælder dog kun værktøjer der ikke har været i brug i mere end 3 år.

Det årlige gebyr er DKK 1460 pr. værktøj. Dette dækker vedligeholdelse af værktøjet, hvilket vil sige at det bliver vedligeholdt til operationel standard året ud. Bliver værktøjet taget i brug i løbet af året, vil det efterfølgende blive opbevaret og vedligeholdt i 3 år uden omkostninger, i henhold til PGT-2010.

Alle kunder der har værktøjer liggende som ikke har været i brug i mere end 3 år, vil blive informeret om dette pr. skrift i løbet af januar 2015. I så fald skal vi modtage en bekræftelse fra dig indenfor en måned, hvis værktøjet fortsat ønskes opbevaret og serviceret. Hvis vi ikke modtager denne bekræftelse indenfor den angivne tidsfrist, vil værktøjet blive skrottet uden videre varsel.

Dette tiltag vil være med til at forbedre vores service og leveringsevne.

Med venlig hilsen

Purso Oy

Pekka Myllykangas

Nordisk Profil

Mikala Enghoff

Appendix 4. Initial announcement for the new die storage (Germany)

PURSO®

4.11.2014

Sehr geehrter Damen und Herren,

Im Rahmen der Weiterentwicklung unserer Werkzeugverwaltung, unserer Werkzeuginstandhaltung sowie Werkzeugfunktionssicherheit geht die Purso Oy zu einer kostenpflichtigen Lagerung nicht benötigter Werkzeuge über.

Funktionsfähige Presswerkzeuge bilden die Basis und den Beginn für unseren gesamten Prozess. Vor dem Hintergrund einer wachsenden Zahl von Werkzeugen sowie steigendem Service- und Lagerungsaufwand beginnt die Purso Oy mit der kostenpflichtigen Lagerung *solcher Werkzeuge, die seit bereits 3 Jahren oder länger unbenutzt ohne weitere Profilbestellungen gelagert wurden.*

Der Preis beträgt 195€ je Werkzeug und Jahr. Dafür verpflichtet sich die Purso Oy jeweils für ein weiteres Jahr die Lagerung, Pflege und Produktionsbereitschaft des Werkzeuges sicherzustellen. Wird während dieses Zeitraumes eine Bestellung für Artikel aus dem Werkzeug platziert, so steht das Werkzeug in der Folge wieder 3 Jahre entsprechend unserer allgemeinen Bedingungen ohne weitere Lagerungskosten für den Kunden zur Verfügung.

Bis Ende Januar 2015 werden wir Sie schriftlich über jedes betroffene Werkzeug informieren, welches sich bereits 3 Jahre oder länger ohne Bestellungen, ungenutzt im Lager befindet. Bitte informieren Sie uns danach schriftlich bis Ende Februar 2015, sofern Sie eine weitere Lagerung des Werkzeuges wünschen und sich damit zur Zahlung der oben genannten Kosten verpflichten. Sollten wir keine derartige schriftliche Anweisung zur Fortführung der Lagerung erhalten, so wird das(die) betroffene Werkzeug(e) ohne weitere Information verschrottet.

Diese Maßnahme trägt zu einer weiteren Verbesserung in Effizienz und Qualität der Verwaltung von wirklich benötigten Werkzeugen bei.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Purso Oy

Pekka Myllykangas

Vertriebsleiter

Appendix 5. Initial announcement for the new die storage (Finnish)

PURSO®

28.11.2014

Arvoisa asiakkaamme ja yhteistyökumppanimme.

Purso Oy kehittää pursotustyökalujen toimintavarmuutta, varastointia sekä huoltoa ja siirtyy työkalujen maksulliseen varastointipalveluun.

Toimiva pursotustyökalu on kaiken toimintamme perusta. Työkalumäärien yhä kasvaessa ja vaatiessa parempaa huoltovarmuutta sekä -tilaa, siirtyy Purso Oy 1.1.2015 alkaen työkalujen maksulliseen varastointiin. *Maksullinen varastointi koskee vain ja ainoastaan niitä pursotustyökaluja, jotka ovat olleet käyttämättöminä ilman profiilitilausta yli 3 vuotta.*

Varastointipalvelun vuosikustannus on 195€ / työkalu. Tällä Purso Oy sitoutuu huoltamaan ja pitämään työkalun toimintakunnossa asianmukaisesti seuraavan vuoden ajan. Mikäli pursotustyökalulla tehtävää profiilia tilataan ko. aikana, se tarkoittaa automaattisesti, että työkalu on jälleen seuraavat kolme (3) vuotta käytettävissänne ilman eri kustannusta toimitusehtojemme mukaisesti.

Kolme vuotta ilman tuotantoa olleista pursotustyökaluista tullaan ilmoittamaan kirjallisesti tammikuun 2015 aikana. Tämän jälkeen teillä on kuukausi aikaa ilmoittaa, mikäli haluatte Purson varastoivan työkalujanne edelleen ja sitoudutte maksamaan siitä em. varastoinnin vuosikustannuksen. Mikäli emme saa vastaustanne määräajassa, tullaan työkalu(t) ilman erillistä ilmoitusta romuttamaan.

Näillä toimilla tulemme edelleen parantamaan palvelutasoamme ja toimituskykyämme.

Ystävällisin terveisin

Purso Oy

Pekka Myllykangas

myyntipäällikkö

Appendix 6. Agreement for handing the ownership of a die to the customer (Finnish)

PURSO®

xx.xx.2015

Työkalujen hallintaoikeuden luovutus

Tällä päivämäärällä Purso Oy luovuttaa hallinnastaan työkalut [profiliinumerot] [asiakas], joka omistaa oikeudet kyseisiin profiilimuotoihin. Samalla Purso Oy luopuu kaikesta vastuustaan pitää työkalu(t) toimintakunnossa, eikä takaa enää niiden toimivuutta.

Tällä sopimuksella asiakas vahvistaa, että hänelle on annettu tiedoksi kyseisten profiilityökalujen olevan optimoituja Purso Oy:n pursotuslinjoille, eivätkä ne suurella todennäköisyydellä sovellu muiden toimittajien laitteistoille. Asiakas on myös tietoinen, että Purso Oy ei ole enää velvollinen toimittamaan profiilia kyseisillä työkaluilla. Mikäli yhteisellä sopimuksella päätetään työkaluja vielä käyttää, vastuu ja kaikki mahdolliset siihen liittyvät kustannukset kuten työkalurikot, koeajot, korjaukset ja korvaavien työkalujen hankinta ovat asiakkaan puolella.

Työkalut lähetetään asiakkaan kustannuksella.

Siurossa xx.xx.2015

Purso Oy _____

Asiakas _____

Purso Oy
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